

**Montana Historical Society**  
**Biennial Report on State-Owned Heritage Properties to the**  
**Preservation Review Board**  
**Pursuant to MCA 22-3-424 (4)**  
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**Executive Summary**

The Montana Historical Society presents this revision of the biennial report to the Montana Preservation Review Board as required by Montana Codes Annotated (MCA) 22-3-424 (4): “an act requiring state agencies and the Montana University System to biennially report to the Preservation Review Board on the status and maintenance needs of agency heritage properties.”

MCA 22-3-424 (4) outlines five reporting requirements state agencies must include in their reports to the Preservation Board. The statute requires the following:

- A. A list of heritage properties managed by the agencies as those properties have been identified pursuant to this section

- B. The status and condition of each heritage property
- C. The stewardship efforts in which the agencies have engaged to maintain each heritage property and the cost of those activities
- D. A prioritized list of the maintenance needs for the properties
- E. A record of the agency's compliance with subsections MCA 22-3-424 (1) and (2)

In reporting on each of the three properties, we will provide the above information and supporting documents where appropriate. The process of preparing this report allowed us to review our oversight, the needs of each property and to consider the options for preservation. Ongoing funding is provided for the Original Governor's Mansion through legislative appropriation in the budget of the Montana Historical Society. State funding has not been available to support the Moss Mansion and the Lewis and Clark Bridge. However, state funding for 2023 Biennium was available for the Moss Mansion via SB 338.

**A. A list of the heritage properties managed by the agencies as those properties have been identified pursuant to this section**

The Montana Historical Society identified two historic houses and one bridge that meet the reporting criteria.

1. Original Governors' Mansion and Carriage House (24LC088), 304 North Ewing, Helena Montana
2. Moss Mansion (24YL0263), 914 Division Street, Billings, Montana
3. Wolf Point Bridge (aka Lewis and Clark Bridge) (24KV0438), Montana Route 13, McCone County

**B. The status and condition of each heritage property**

See appendices for supporting documents and work plans.

1. **The Original Governor's Mansion 304 North Ewing, Helena, Montana**, was built in 1888. The property is listed in the National Register of Historical Places. The status of the building is satisfactory, and the condition/integrity is excellent. The Original Governor's Mansion and Carriage House are a unique property in that both the Department of Administration and the Montana Historical Society work together on heritage preservation of the property. The Montana Historical Society is responsible for the finishings and furnishings for the interior of the Original Governor's Mansion and Carriage House. The care of the structure of the OGM and Carriage House is under the management of the Department of Administration. The Montana Historical Society administers the Original Governor's Mansion as an historic house museum by providing public tours and historical interpretation, conducting historical research: maintaining historically appropriate interior furnishings. Staff conducts regular maintenance and monitoring of the interior furnishings and exhibits.

MHS ranks the property a 1 on the preservation priority scale.

Status: Satisfactory

Condition: Fair

2. **The Moss Mansion, 914 Division Street, Billings, Montana**, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is owned by the City of Billings and the Montana Historical Society. The Billings Preservation Society 501(c) (3) has a contractual agreement covered under MCA 22-3-603. "Management of historic sites and buildings - contracts" that states that the Billings Preservation Society administers, operates, maintains, and restores the Moss Mansion Historic House Museum. As part of this agreement, a representative from the Montana Historical Society performs a walk-through of the facility once every biennium. The purpose of the Moss Mansion Museum is to preserve, collect, describe, interpret, and exhibit artifacts and documents relating to the 83-year occupancy of the Preston B. Moss family.

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The Billings Preservation Society is responsible for the care of this building. Therefore, we rate this property as a 3 on MHS's preservation priority scale.

Status: Satisfactory

Condition: Good

3. **The Wolf Point Bridge (The Lewis and Clark Bridge), McCone County, MT,** is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Wolf Point Bridge is a five-span truss bridge and includes the longest through truss span in the state and was completed in 1930. MHS ranks the property a 5 on the preservation priority scale.

Status: Watch

Condition: Fair

**C. The stewardship efforts in which the agencies have engaged to maintain each heritage property and the cost of those activities**

The Montana Historical Society administers the Original Governor's Mansion as a historic house museum by providing public tours, historical interpretation, conducting historical research; and maintaining historically appropriate interior furnishings. Staff conducts regular maintenance and monitoring of the interior furnishings and exhibits. During the past biennium deterioration of the front porch structure and balustrade were observed. This should be assessed by a structural architect or engineer to determine the extent of the damage. MHS met in September 2020 with GSD and A&E to call attention to the issue. A plan to address the concerns has not yet been formulated. Discussions on how to request Long Range Planning funding for the Original Governor's Mansion are on-going. New trees were planted to replace the ones that were removed the previous biennium. The cost for Heritage Interpretation, Education and Awareness project activity conducted at the OGM for the biennium was \$54,976, and cost for operating was \$4,309.

The Billings Preservation Society administers the Moss Mansion as an historic house museum by providing public tours and historical

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interpretation. They are responsible for all maintenance and restoration projects for the building. In 2008 the Billings Preservation Society undertook a needs assessment building analysis from which they determined preservation priorities for the Moss Mansion.

Montana Historical Society has not conducted a physical condition report of the Moss Mansion. Actual dollar costs are available from the Billings Preservation Society.

In 2018 Risk Management & Tort Defense Division provided a Property Loss Prevention Report after an on-site review of the Moss Mansion. And in 2019 RMTD provided an on-site survey of the electrical system of the Moss Mansion and Pavilion.

In 2020 the Moss Mansion completed \$400,000 worth of conservation projects including from painting plaster work, and roof repairs.

In 2015 the Montana Historical Society contracted for a professional bridge inspection and condition assessment of the Wolf Point Bridge. The inspection report was submitted in 2016 in MHS's State-Owned Heritage Properties report.

**D. A prioritized list of the maintenance needs for the properties**

**1. The Original Governor's Mansion 304 North Ewing, Helena, Montana**

The Montana Historical Society works with the DOA to ensure the preservation of the historical integrity of the OGM and Carriage House are maintained. List of prioritized maintenance needs projects include:

- enlist a structural architect or engineer to assess front porch structure and balustrade, repair or replace as required.
- repaint and replace existing wallpaper with period appropriate wallpaper in the third-floor south bedroom.
- repaint and replace existing wallpaper with as close as

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possible reproduction of existing original historical wallpaper for the third-floor north bedroom.

- Repair and paint the basement storage room wall.

**STATUS:** Ongoing

**2. The Moss Mansion, 914 Division Street, Billings, Montana,**

administered by the Billings Preservation Society – a non-state agency has determined the following maintenance priorities

- develop a plan to correct settlement, cracking, minor maintenance issues on an ongoing basis
- develop a plan to reset brick pavers and possible long-term replacement of some concrete.

**STATUS:** Ongoing

**3. The Wolf Point Bridge (The Lewis and Clark Bridge), McCone County,**

**MT** Inspections of the structure were completed in 2015 to identify maintenance needs. This includes an underwater inspection, a superstructure inspection and a report summary with the support of Montana Department of Transportation. The inspection report summary was submitted as part of the 2016 Biennial Report on State Owned Properties. Priority maintenance needs project include:

- Monitor condition, usage and stewardship.
- Consider disposition of the property

**STATUS:** Ongoing

**E. A record of the agencies' compliance with subsections MCA 22-3-424 (1) and (2)**

The Montana Historical Society complies fully with MCA 22-3-424 sections 1 and 2 regarding the maintenance and repair of the agency's heritage and non-heritage properties. The Department confers with the Montana Historical

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Society State Historic Preservation Office and the Department of Administration during maintenance, repair, and construction projects. In the case of the Moss Mansion, the Montana Historical Society also confers with the Billings Preservation Society. In the case of the Lewis and Clark Bridge, the MHS also confers with the Montana Department of Transportation

**Appendices:**

**Section One: The Original Governor's Mansion, Helena, MT**

Heritage Property Reporting Form

**Section Two: The Moss Mansion, Billings,**

**MT** Heritage Property Reporting Form

**Section Three: The Lewis and Clark Bridge, Wolf Point, MT**

Heritage Property Reporting Form